**There is no reason not to follow your heart**

*This is an excerpt from the commencement ad­dress Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer, gave at Stanford University on June 12, 2005:* When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right."  
  
It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" Whenever the answer has been No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.  
  
Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost every­thing— all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure— these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of think­ing you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.  
  
About a year ago, I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months.  
  
My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.  
  
I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that eve­ning I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pan­creatic cancer that is curable with surgery.  
  
I had the surgery and I'm fine now.  
  
This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I get for a few more decades.  
  
Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept: No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share.  
  
Your time is limited, so don't waste it living some­one else's life. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Every­thing else is secondary.

  
**A thank-you card for Steve Jobs, a day after his death, at Apple headquarters in California.** ASSOCIATED PRESS

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**Steve Jobs**

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